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Sunday, 26 October 2008

# Post-Land: The paradoxes of a speculative realist politics.

To answer some of Mark K-Punk's questions (original posts here and here):

1. Is this pure capital not a phantasmic projection? Yes, *absolutely*, one which does not exist at present but which, as the powerful fiction of a completed truth, (to horribly misuse Badiou) might be able to actualise its own reality.
2. The problem of *Agency*: A more difficult question undoubtedly, but one which I hope to answer in part below, though with certain problems.
3. How to evade a fall into neo-liberalism…

To distinguish left-Landianism from Land's own (surely now firmly rightward in its orientation), we might make two points:

1. Capital in its present form is incapable of delivering anything but inertia, or at least

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that parallax between a interminable rush of change at the level of fashion and an eerie stasis in terms of innovative cultural or political forms it seems incapable of throwing up. Hence there is a need for a very real praxis upon it (and its articulation with institutional forms). Land's position is a shadowy obverse to that of the Multitude(s)/Autonomia group, that "we are already (almost) there". He forgets that capitalist relative deterritorializations are always usually accompanied by an immediate reterritorialization, as determined by the capitalist axiomatic. It is this that needs to be worked upon, the shifting of the balance of de/re-territorializations.

2. To evade the dark/banal fall into mere neo-liberalism, we must maintain a firm belief in the horrifying and utterly negative nature of capital. It is in this meaning of the term "left-Landian" then that we might position this accelerationist reading of capitalism- as a preservation of the critique of the left, and the praxis of the right, the preservation of capital's negative dimension, and its absolute valorisation for this very reason. For the form of politics this demarcates comes closest to what the literary buffoon Martin Amis termed "horrorism"- part of the nomenclature he used in his pitiful misreading of islamist terrorist activities. I certainly enjoyed the term, if not its application, for it conveyed something of what a less literal terroristic praxis might consist, in the sense of what a non-dialectical amassing of negativity might mean, a horror piled upon horror, a critical mass capable of pulling the subjectivity attached to the organic human substrate through to some nether-zone of dissolution, a Deleuzean becoming crucially without affirmation. Outside of a vitalist notion of an inhuman jouissance, (shared by the libidinal economists) the market delivers not a utopia of free-flowing desire but rather a perfect dystopia of the genuinely inhuman, a non-affective cold-machinism truly adequate to capital-in-itself. The irresistible inverse image of 9/11 presents itself: Instead of flying the planes into symbols of western capitalism, we plunge the financial-capitalistic contents of the towers into the human world itself, dissolving, sundering, shattering…

The question of what form the praxis necessary to destabilise the current state-capital bond has already been answered in part- a kind of meta-terrorism, operating on the plane of capital itself (ideally, in the conception which has obsessed me for some time, in the form of a capitalist surrealism, the exploitation of credit based financial systems for their primary destructive potential. This destruction is not merely to be thought on the ability to trigger vast crashes, which is readily apparent, but further their capacity to destabilise the consistency of value itself). That this consists in taking more seriously the claims of finance capital than even its own agents is the very point itself, and is in a sense an actualisation of Lyotard's gestures towards a 'nihilist theory of credit'. Further we might conceptualise the collective forms necessary to actualise this praxis as being very much in the mode of the kind of Maoist party delineated by Badiou in Théorie du Sujet, an institutional actor capable of allowing the ephemeral vanishing term of history (now surrealist avant-capital, rather than the proletariat of course) to cohere, for as long as required to enable it to achieve the absolute dissolution of all structuration, including itself.

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There is a significant question which remains unanswered, one which was touched upon by Schoolboyerrors in the comments box of the previous post:

> "To what end accelerationism? In order to provoke a crisis, as you say, in the system, but for what? For the future of humanity? Is this inhumanism, then, merely a deferral of pathos until such time as revolution has been achieved?"

Accelerationism more generally might be considered to take a number of forms, fitting into two kinds of category, broadly being "weak" accelerationism, and "strong" accelerationism:

1) Weak Accelerationism: By driving capitalism towards an accelerated position, the conditions for something resembling a communist revolution might be engendered. In this (limited) sense accelerationism is merely an anti-ameliorationism, which sets the conditions for revolution by undoing the improvements in living conditions which western capitalism (in part) produces, mainly through the state, in order to further its own continued existence within its homeostatic form. Whilst we would not want to fall into a total economic determinism here, it appears relatively obvious (as it did to Lenin in What is to be Done) that soft leftist activities (socialist parties, unions etc) far from being agents of genuine change merely arrest the situation as it stands, frequently operating as part of the axiomatic machinery ensuring the stability of the homeostatic form of capitalism. In this sense then accelerationism opposes ameliorative leftism by acting to foreground the structural privations of the capitalist system. Further the utilisation of capitalist institutions for their primary negatory character would work to undermine the consistency of capitalist ideology. We might think of the current financial crisis as perhaps giving us such an opportunity, though we have already noted our cynicism as to the lack of an effective political organisation to capitalise upon this.

2) Strong Accelerationism: Unlike the "weak" model of accelerationism, which maintains the thesis that capital shifted beyond its current homeostatic form entails a collapse or fundamental catastrophe, suitable for the inculcation of some kind of neo-Marxist revolutionary communism, the "strong" form of accelerationism entertains the notion that far from ushering in the downfall of capitalism, acceleration beyond a certain point radically alters the nature of the processes of capital itself. Here acceleration is not a means to a crisis in the system, but rather a radical mutation of the system itself, along with it the kinds of subjectivations made possible.

Certainly the revolution which the "strong" accelerationist model has in mind can be far from merely a humanist pathos postponed, an inhumanism in the service of the ultimate utopian destiny of the human, or of some kind of vitalist maximisation of what these particular (human) bodies can do. Instead we might think of it as the process necessary to erase the human altogether (as a form of subjectivation), to actualise

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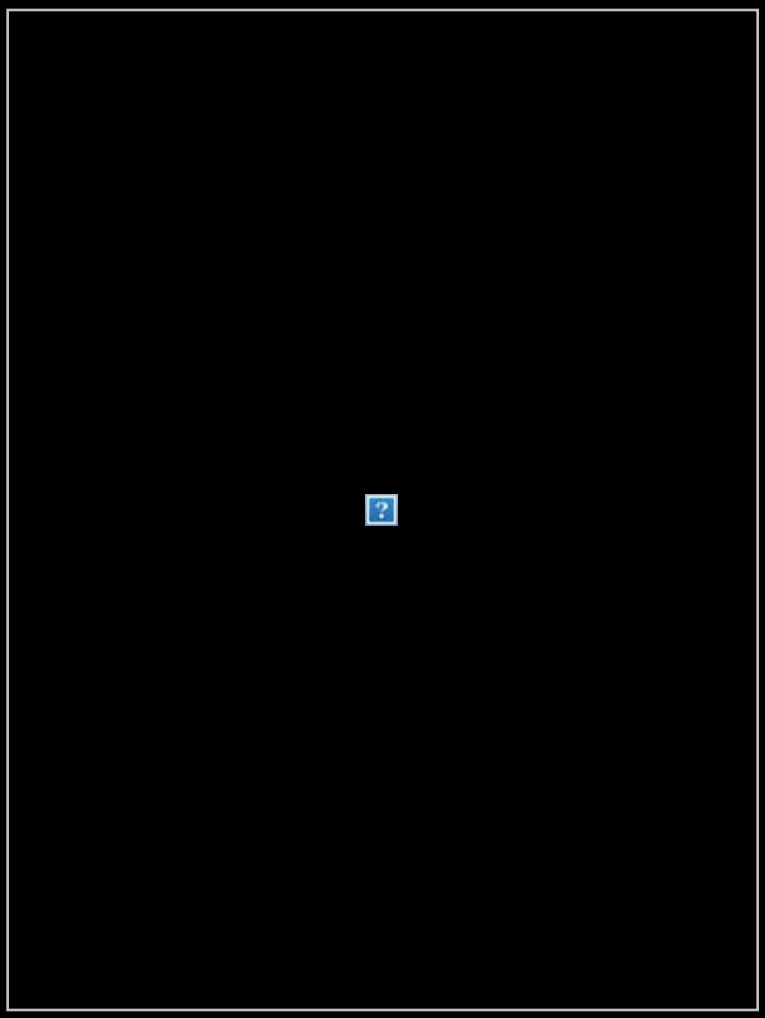
something close to the dissolution of subjectivity (and the initiation of what might resemble a Guyotadian political economy).



But there is a more serious, and perhaps intractable question which underlies this: How might one ground a politics which aims towards an inhuman becoming (or perhaps we ought to say de-subjectivation) outside of a discourse of either alienation or alternately some kind of pseudo-biological vitalist ethology such as Deleuze's appropriation of Spinoza's conatus? This is really the problem which lies at the core of a speculative realist politics (and ethics and aesthetics also). In other words of how to apply a skilfully de-correlated philosophy to the always correlated domains of the subject, (even if our intent is to ground a politics whose aim is towards the erasure of the very dimension of the subject itself). For surely there seems to be a presumption of the continuation of the problem of alienation (or at least, that the incommensurable nature of the current form of subjectivation with capitalism is itself the reason for our need to close the gap). Part of what I am looking for is a way to ground the Deleuzo-Guattarian model of capitalism (which even their harshest critics such as Peter Hallward and Ray Brassier hold is the finest conception of capital since Marx) outside of a faulty affirmative vitalism. That capital operates via a (largely state-mediated) axiomatic, controlling relative de/reterritorializations of flows seems too useful a model even for Brassier himself to give up on (indeed he uses it unproblematically in the original article of 'Nihil Unbound' to call one of Badiou's silent a prioris into question). But even if such a regrounding were to be possible (upon a speculative realist xenoeconomics, as I think will need to be the case) the aim of the exercise, to re-introduce this into the social field in order to enable a radically new form

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of politics to become thinkable, the fundamental problematic remains. Outside either a vitalist ethology of 'natural' auto-self-maximisation, or some kind of Marxist-Hegelian dialectical drive towards the elimination of contradiction in the same, how might we be able to ground the very need for an inhumanising desubjectivation at all? Though we might wish to create a system which has had done with judgement, to ground the praxis (and here we return to the "sticky" issue of agency) necessary to arrive at this state requires the illegitimate use of the very devices the praxis seeks to erase.

Posted by Alex at 23:41

Labels: Badiou, Brassier, Capitalism, Xenoeconomics

**6 comments:**

schoolboyerrors said...

Alex,
Another great post. I'm very much enjoying this thread.

In order to follow on from my previous comment:
What I believe is essentially so compelling (and, as it turns out, bathetic) about Deleuze's analysis of capitalism is his connection of this to his vitalist ontology, whereby in its accumulation and perpetual orientation towards an excess, capitalism appears as an endogeneous expression of life itself (whose nature, as per Dz's reading of Spinoza is a maximisation of affective intensity). As I mentioned briefly and as you point out in this post, your notion of Xenoeconomics aims at a perspective on capitalism which would separate it from a vitalist ontology, making it radically *inhuman*, unfettered by a vitalism which considers the inhuman as really nothing but *more* human (ie. an excess which the figure of the human can no longer contain…) and therefore utopian (cf. Negri's potere, Dz's virtual). Putting it succinctly, you say:

"Outside of a vitalist notion of an inhuman jouissance, (shared by the libidinal economists) the market delivers not a utopia of free-flowing desire but rather a perfect dystopia of the genuinely inhuman, a non-affective cold-machinism truly adequate to capital-in-itself."

A few thoughts on this: It appears to me that what your vision of capitalism demands, and what might ultimately connect to the problem you raise at the end of your post (that of grounding xenoeconomics) is a rethinking of the notion of the human outside this vitalist prejudice for excess and maximisation. Perhaps one need not affirm a speculative realist abandonment of the category of the human tout court, but rather use the latter perversely in order to maximise the effects of accellerationism.

For example, how might the problem of grounding be altered were we to posit the notion of a human subject which would be defined as nothing but lack, poverty and isolation? (I'm thinking here perhaps of Agamben's notion of the Muselmann without his Heideggerian predilection for the notion of potentiality, but there are obviously numerous other examples.) This would serve to segregate the orientation of the human from that of capitalism (or even divest the former of any and all orientation), and exacerbate the discrepancies between the human and capitalist accellerationism, such that the latter's excess becomes more and more horrific, having no positive anthropocentric grounding whatsoever. In such a case, it would be able to maximise its cold machinism, surpassing the human which it

exceeds in every way. I think this connects to your response to k-punk's first question.

Yet, on the other hand, setting the human in contradiction to capitalism and its machinery in the past has only resulted in a romanticisation of the pre-modern (Heidegger) and pre-capitalist forms (material labour): how are we to avoid this?

I apologise, this has become a little rambling, but essentially I have two questions:
1. What, for you is human?
2. How, if at all, can this be connected (even negatively) to accelerated capitalism and Xenoeconomics?

28 October 2008 15:13

Carl said...

I know you, little libertine. I know you're a real coocoo.

Spitting in the wishingwell. Theory that requires real or speculative totalization of alienation as the transformative engine gets choked on the manifold fumes.

As theoretical entrepreneurship, though, this is pretty freakin' sweet!

28 October 2008 16:37

Alex said...

Diarmuid/Schoolboyerrors: These are exactly the right questions, I hope to answer them, as far as possible soon- just one thing though: get blogging sir! Your work on the conatus (and the Guyotat stuff too actually) have been deeply inspirational of late, and your comments as acute as ever... come on...

29 October 2008 00:25

J-G said...

Lately I've been struggling to understand exactly how the "inhuman" fits into xenoeconomics as praxis.

I can't help but think that becoming inhuman is far from the first order of business for acclerationism...after all, the subject (as a sort of assemblage) is pretty useful when it comes to redirecting machinic phylum out of the pacman-like "dead end" of horizontal-vertical movement and into transversality, isn't it? Until we get there (out of "machinic enslavement") as (human) subjects, we're not ready to address the problem of institutions... it's not until when we've become a "machine of production and expression of desire that demands to be applicable everywhere - in hospitals, in schools, in political struggles" that we'll be ready to properly infect/affect institutions and/or terrorize markets. Or do you think that becoming inhuman is the very method by which we'll break into the transversal and out of deadlock? Is the inhuman assemblage the machine that is "applicable everywhere"?

I'd be very interested in reading more about what you might call the ontological basis of xenoeconomics in the inhuman, especially insofar as this would differ from D&G's notion of the virtual. If I could straighten this out, then I'm sure I'd be ready to sit down in the boardroom and go over the strategic plan...;)

2 November 2008 07:52

cheap wow gold said...

It was not long cheap wow goldbefore some one knocked atwow gold cheap wow gold for salethe house-door and called, open the door, dear children, your mother is here, and has brought something back with her for each of you. But the little

wow8goldkids knew that it was the wolf, by the rough voice. We will gold4power not open the door, cried they, you are not our mother. She has a soft, pleasant voice, but your voice is rough, you are the wolf.

Then the wolf went World Of Warcraft Goldaway to a shopkeeper and bought himself a great cheapest wow goldlump of chalk, ate this and made mmogap his voice soft with it. The he came back, knocked at the door of the house, and igsky called, open the door, dear children, your mother is here and Cheapest Wow Goldhas brought something back with her for each of you.

29 March 2009 06:21

sexy said...

麻將,台灣彩卷,六合彩開獎號碼,運動彩卷,六合彩,遊戲,線上遊戲,cs online,搓麻將,矽谷麻將,明星三缺一, 橘子町,麻將大悶鍋,台客麻將,公博,game,淘,中華職棒,麗的線上小遊戲,國士無雙麻將,麻將館,賭博遊戲,威力彩,威力彩開獎號碼,龍龍運動網,史萊姆,史萊姆好玩遊戲,史萊姆第一個家,史萊姆好玩遊戲區,樂透彩開獎號碼,遊戲天堂,天堂,好玩遊戲,遊戲基地,無料遊戲王,好玩遊戲區,麻將遊戲,好玩遊戲區,小遊戲,電玩快打

情趣用品,情趣,A片,AIO,AV,AV女優,A漫,免費A片,情色,情色貼圖,色情小說,情色文學,色情,寄情竹園小遊戲,色情遊戲,AIO交友愛情館,色情影片,情趣內衣,情趣睡衣,性感睡衣,情趣商品,微風成人,嘟嘟成人網,成人,18成人,成人影城,成人圖片,成人貼圖,成人圖片區,UT聊天室,聊天室,豆豆聊天室 ,哈啦聊天室,尋夢園聊天室,聊天室尋夢園,080苗栗人聊天室,080聊天室,視訊交友網,視訊

借錢,黃金,黃金回收,黃金價格,黃金買賣,當舖

A片,A片,成人網站,成人影片,色情,情色網,情色,AV,AV女優,成人影城,成人,色情A片,日本AV,免費成人影片,成人影片,SEX,免費A片,A片下載,免費A片下載,做愛,情色A片,色情影片,H漫,A漫,18成人

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3 April 2009 12:49

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